Please add new claim 13 as follows:

Accepted

13. (new) The method of claim 9 wherein said contrast agent includes a material to inhibit opsonization.

Remarks

Claims 1-12 are pending in the instant application. Applicants have amended claims 1-12 to more fully conform with U.S. practice and to delete multiple dependencies. Applicants have also added new claim 13. A version of the claims marked up to show the amendments, as well as a clean version of the claims encompassing the amendments, is attached hereto.

Applicants respectfully assert that all amendments are fairly based on the specification, and respectfully request their entry.

Applicants believe that the claims, as amended, are in allowable form, and earnestly solicit the allowance of claims 1-13.

Respectfully submitted,

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Claims (marked-up version showing amendment(s))

Page 18, line 1:

[Claims]

What is claimed is:

1. (once amended) [A]In a method of interventional or intraoperative MRI wherein an invasive device is inserted into the vasculature of a human or non human animal (e.g. mammalian, avian, or reptilian) body or through vascularised tissue in said body and an MR image of at least a part of said body containing said device is generated, the improvement comprising administering a contrast agent into the vasculature of said body either by direct injection of the contrast agent through said device or by i.v. injection of the contrast agent directly into the patient whereby to facilitate visualisation of said device in said image.

2. (once amended) [A]The method of claim 1 wherein said contrast agent is a blood pool contrast agent.

3. (once amended) [A]The method [as claimed in claims 1 or claim 2]of claim 1 wherein [the]a difference in at least one parameter chosen from T_1, T_2 and T_2* between the blood and said device is utilised to generate image contrast between the blood and said device.

4. (once amended) [A]The method [as claimed in any of claims 1 to 3]of claim 1 wherein said device is filled with a diamagnetic material or a paramagnetic material.

5. (once amended) [A]The method [as claimed in any of claims 1 to 4]of claim 1 wherein said contrast agent enhances [the]T_1 and/or T_2* relaxation properties of the blood relative to that of said device.

6. (once amended) [A]The method [as claimed in]of claim 5 wherein: the T_1 relaxation property of the blood is enhanced relative to that of said device; [and wherein]T_1-weighted sequences are used; and said device is filled with diamagnetic material so that the blood appears bright in said image, relative to said device.

7. (once amended) [A]The method [as claimed in]of claim 5 wherein: the T_2* relaxation property of the blood is enhanced relative to that of said device; [and wherein]T_2*-weighted sequences are used; and said device is filled with paramagnetic material so that said device appears bright in said image, relative to the blood.

8. (once amended) [A]The method [as claimed in any of claims 1 to 7]of claim 2 wherein said contrast agent is magnetic iron oxide blood pool contrast agent.

9. (once amended) [A]The method [as claimed in any of claims 1 to 8]of claim 1 wherein said contrast agent comprises superparamagnetic iron oxide particles having on their surfaces degraded starch[and optionally a material which inhibits opsonization].

10. (once amended) [A]The method [as claimed in any of claims 1 to 9]of claim 1 wherein said device is [chosen]selected from the group consisting of catheters, balloons, optical fibres, guide wires, needles, biopsy needles, electrodes, electrode leads, implants, stents and stent grafts.

11. (once amended) [A]The method [as claimed in any of claims 1 to 10]of claim 1 wherein said device is not marked with a magnetic susceptibility agent.

12. (once amended) [The]In a method for use of a blood pool MR contrast agent for the manufacture of a parenterally administrable MR contrast medium for use in a method of surgery or therapy wherein an invasive device is inserted into the vasculature of a human or non human animal body or through vascularised tissue in said body and an MR image of at least a part of said body containing said device is generated, [said method also]the improvement comprising administering said contrast medium into the vasculature of said body whereby to facilitate visualisation of said device in said image.

13. (new) The method of claim 9 wherein said contrast agent includes a material to inhibit opsonization.